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THE

SINFULNESS OF SLAVEHOLDING

SHOWN BY APPEALS TO

REASON AND SCRIPTURE.

BY JOHN G. FEE,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN KENTUCKY.

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SINFULNESS OF SLAVEHOLDING.

SLAVERY SINFUL IN ITSELF

To some of our readers this proposition may seem self-evident, and a set argument unnecessary; for if liberty be right, slavery is wrong. But when we remember that throughout the South, the people do not seem to realize its truth; that very many of the clergy maintain that it is right and sanctioned by the Bible; and that ninety-nine hundredths of the Christian ministry in our land claim that it is at least tolerated by the Bible; that on the floor of that Convention* which met in our own State last spring, to devise plans for the abolition of slavery, it was claimed, by many of the most influential minds, that slavery is not sinful in itself; the reader will see that argument is necessary. If these ministers, and other leading minds, do not know better, they need to be convinced. If they do know better, acting as they do, they should be nailed to the wall; and brief arguments should be put into the hands of the people, by which thus to nail them.

Again, in all moral reforms, it is essentially necessary that we get hold of that greatest of all levers—conscience. This done, the cause will move on, surmounting all difficulties.

* The Convention alluded to is that which met in Frankfort, Ky. April 25, 1849

If then we can show that slavery is sinful, and endangers the soul's interests of those practising it, and those winking at it, we may expect that the people will act speedily and efficiently; "for all that a man hath will he give for his life."

And it is a fact happily confirming the foregoing, that the large mass of those in our State, now struggling for the freedom of the slave, are moral and religious men. Conscience is at the bottom of the move, and conscience we need more fully to enlist.

Also, as the Christian Church in our land has a controlling influence in modelling the public sentiment and laws of the land, either for good or for evil, it is all-important that her action should be right on this subject. And as she is designed to be the salt of the land, to purify it from its vices, it is high time that she was up and doing.

It should be stated here, moreover, that it properly belongs to the slaveholder to prove that his course is justifiable, and not to anti-slavery men to prove its sinfulness. And that for two reasons: 1st. Slavery is a restriction, to say the least, and all restrictions in society require justification. 2d. The civilized world regard it as being wrong.

For both these reasons, the presumption is so strong against slavery, that we should be justified in condemning those who uphold it, unless they can prove it to be right. With strict propriety, therefore, we might confine our attention to proving that the arguments by which they attempt to justify it are unsound. But in order to produce full conviction, and that conscience may be fully aroused, we shall attempt to show not only the fallacy of their arguments, but also the positive proof that slavery is sinful.

SLAVERY SINFUL.

Slavery is not mere bond-service, as that of an apprentice, or child bound to a guardian until of adult age. Nor is it, as Paley defines, mere "obligation to do service for another," as of a child to a parent up to adult age—as of one who contracts to serve for a certain sum, up to a given time—as of a citizen who, by constitutional compact, may be required to serve as a soldier or juror: each of these is obligation to do service, but not slavery. Slavery is that relation in which

one human being is, without his or her consent, made the property of another or other human beings.*

That this relation is sinful, is manifest from the following considerations :

1. Those facts and arguments proving that the reader, or any one human being, has a right to liberty, prove that all other persons, not criminals, have a right to liberty.

The fact that one man, or race of men, may have more intellectual capacity than another man, or race of men, gives no just ground for enslaving the inferior ; otherwise the most intellectual man that exists may have a right to enslave every other man—white and black.

Nor does the fact that one man has a darker skin, thicker lip, flatter nose, or more knappy hair than another, give a sufficient and just cause why he should be enslaved ; otherwise he who has a fairer skin, thinner lip, sharper nose, or straighter hair than you or I, may have a right to enslave us ; and the fairest man in the world may enslave every other man.

Again, by common consent, as right, there are colored men—negroes, who, in the South as well as the North, are free men, having, by protection of law, personal ownership, proceeds of their labor, and other natural rights.

Then by common consent a black skin, and all the features of the negro, do not of themselves constitute a reason why a man should be enslaved.

Again, the larger portion of the human family are colored. Is the large majority to be enslaved by the minority, because climate and other local causes have given them a darker complexion than that of the few pale faces ? † What presumption ! And yet we often hear it, and that, too, in high places.

* That only is a definition which distinguishes the thing or relation defined, from every other thing or relation.

† The following article is found in the *Millennial Harbinger* for May, 1850, published by Alexander Campbell, Bethany, Va. :—

“THE DIFFERENT COLOR OF THE JEWS.—Although the Jew becomes the subject of every form of government, from the autocracy of Russia to the democracy of America, he retains his theocratic creed. Neither barbarism the most rude, nor civilization the most refined, has succeeded in altering his peculiar countenance ; for in the back-woods of the New World, and at the court of the British sovereign, he is instantly known. Time, that changes all things else, seems to stay his rough hand when he approaches the Jew. Compare his lineaments, sculptured in marble and cast in bronze—for the arch and medal of Titus

2. In a state of nature, before governments are formed, man, universal man, owns himself—*has a right* to liberty. Now, whatever violates nature's order must be sinful.

Not does man lose his right to liberty by becoming a member of an organized society. He has no right to barter it away, and society has no divine right to take it from him—panderers to despotism, in our own State, from a foreign land, to the contrary notwithstanding. [We refer to such men as President Shannon.]

The province of human government is to protect—not to destroy man's natural rights, but more perfectly secure them to him, as may be shown from the best of authorities; (which authorities show also that slavery is sinful.)

The framers of our Declaration of Independence said: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and have certain *inalienable* rights; among these are life, *liberty*, and the pursuit of happiness. To *secure* these rights [not destroy them] governments are formed, deriving their *just* powers from the *consent* of the *governed*."

still exist—with those of the living Jew, and be convinced of his unchangeableness. This permanence of physiognomy is evidently traceable to a supernatural cause, which prevents the usual modification of features, in order to accomplish an important object. Into this it is not our province now to enter, yet we cannot help remarking that the Jew is a witness, not of one truth, but of many truths. Marvellously does he illustrate the consistency of the original unity of man with the most extensive diversity. His features have been cast in an eternal mould, but his color is dependent on outward causes. Natural law is forbidden to operate on the one, but left to take its course with the other. A fixed physiognomy declares the unity of the people, while their diversity of complexion as distinctly manifests the influence of the climate. Every shade of color clothes with its livery the body of the Jew, from the jet-black of the Hindoo to the ruddy white of the Saxon. The original inhabitant of Palestine was doubtless dusky-skinned and dark-haired, but the cooler sky and more temperate air of Poland and Germany have substituted a fair complexion and light hair. On the other hand, the scorching sun of India has curled and crisped his hair, and blackened his skin, so that his features alone distinguish him physically from the native Hindoo. On the Malabar coast of Hindostan are two colonies of Jews—an old and young colony—separated by color. The elder colony are black, and the younger (dwelling in a town called Mattacheri) comparatively fair, so as to have obtained the name of the 'White Jews.' The difference is satisfactorily accounted for by the former having been subjected to the influence of the climate for a much longer time than the latter."—*Quarterly Review*.

Thus recognizing the fact that man in a state of nature owns himself; and in entering society he loses not these natural rights, but has a right to their exercise on his own part, and *protection* of them from others.

Blackstone, the most distinguished writer on English law, and whose works are text-books in American jurisprudence, says, "Those rights which God and nature have established, and are therefore called natural rights, such as life and liberty, need no aid of human laws to be more effectually invested in *every man* than they are; and *no human legislature has power to abridge or destroy them.*"

Again, speaking of these natural and absolute rights, he says: "The primary object of law is to *maintain* and *regulate* these absolute rights. When, therefore, human laws or governments attempt to take away the *natural* rights of an unoffending person, they violate the very end for which they were formed; they attempt that which they have no right to do." Blackstone, speaking of those things intrinsically wrong, says: "The declaratory part of municipal law has no force or operation at all." It is of no authority when it violates *natural* right. For, as he says: "Upon the law of nature and revelation all human laws depend. And no human law should be suffered to contradict them; and should any human laws *allow* or enjoin us to commit a violation of the laws of nature or of revelation, we are bound to violate human law, or else violate both the natural and revealed law." Every innocent man has a right to liberty now, and no human law may deprive him of it.

If Indians, or Africans, or any other body of men, white or black, should pass laws that the reader, with his family, should be held as slaves, and should actually by force of numbers subjugate him, and hold his posterity after him as slaves, would he feel for a moment that they had a *right* to do it? No! Every man is bound to know that slavery is sinful.

JEFFERSON, speaking of slavery, says: "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed the only firm basis—a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the *gift of God*—that they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep for ever; that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events; that it may become

possible by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest."—*Notes on Virginia.*

WASHINGTON.—“Your purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit might diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country.”—*Letter to La Fayette, 10th May, 1786.*

And Washington emancipated all his own slaves.

MONROE.—“We have found that this evil (slavery) has preyed upon the very vitals of the community, and has been prejudicial to ALL THE STATES in which it has existed.”—*Speech in Virginia Convention.*

WILLIAM PINKNEY.—“It is really matter of astonishment to me, that the people of Maryland do not blush at the very name of freedom. Not content with exposing to the world, for near a century, a speaking picture of abominable oppression, they are still ingenious to prevent the hand of generosity from robbing it of half its horrors.”—*Speech on Slavery in Maryland House of Delegates, 1789.*

PATRICK HENRY.—“It is a debt we owe the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law which warrants slavery.”—*Letter to A. Benezet.*

JOHN RANDOLPH.—“Sir, I envy neither the head nor the heart of that man, FROM THE NORTH, who rises here to defend slavery from principle.”—*Speech in Congress, 1829.*

THOMAS J. RANDOLPH.—“It is a practice, and an increasing practice, in parts of Virginia, TO REAR SLAVES FOR MARKET. How can an honorable mind, a patriot and a lover of his country, bear to see this Ancient Dominion converted into one vast menagerie, where men are reared for market like oxen for the shambles?”—*Speech in Virginia Legislature, 1832.*

HENRY CLAY.—“I consider slavery a curse—a curse to the master—a wrong, a *grievous wrong* to the slave. In the abstract it is all wrong, and no possible contingency can make it right.”—*Found in a Speech delivered in 1839.* His late letter to Mr. Pindell endorses the same statement.

Rev. R. J. BRECKENRIDGE, of Lexington, one of the most respectable citizens of our State, a man of the first talents, and a prominent minister in the Presbyterian Church, says: “What is slavery as it exists among us? We reply, it is

that condition enforced by the laws of one half of the States of this confederacy, in which one portion of the community, called masters, is allowed such power over another portion called slaves, as—

“1. To deprive them of the entire earnings of their own labor, except only so much as is necessary to continue labor itself, by continuing healthy existence—thus committing *clear robbery*.

“2. To reduce them to the necessity of universal concubinage, by denying to them the civil rights of marriage—thus breaking up the dearest relations of life, and encouraging universal prostitution.

“3. To deprive them of the means and opportunities of moral and intellectual culture; in many States making it a high penal offense to teach them to read—thus perpetuating whatever evil there is that proceeds from ignorance.

“4. To set up between parents and their children an authority higher than the impulse of nature and the laws of God, which breaks up the authority of the father over his own offspring, and at pleasure separates the mother at a returnless distance from her child—thus abrogating the clear laws of nature, thus outraging all decency and justice, and degrading and oppressing thousands upon thousands of beings created like themselves in the image of the Most High God. THIS IS SLAVERY, as it is daily exhibited in every slave State.”
—*African Repository*, 1834.

Again he says :

“Out upon such folly! The man who cannot see that involuntary domestic slavery, as it exists among us, is founded upon the principle of taking by force that which is another's, has simply no moral sense.”

Again, in a meeting of the citizens of Fayette county, in the court-house, Lexington, in the month of ———, 1849, called to consider the question of the perpetuation of slavery in this Commonwealth, and addressed by Henry Clay and R. J. Breckenridge, on motion of the latter, the following resolution was adopted :

“*Resolved*, That hereditary, domestic slavery, as it exists among us,

“1. Is hostile to the prosperity of the Commonwealth.

“2. It is inconsistent with a state of sound morality.

“3. It is opposed to the fundamental principles of a free government.

“4. IT IS CONTRARY TO THE RIGHTS OF MANKIND.”

A short time previous, on the floor of the Convention which met in Frankfort to devise plans for the abolition of slavery, speaking of human rights, he said: “The dearest of all rights to man is a right to himself; and it [slavery] is the most atrocious of all evils.”

This the writer heard and noted at the time. And those who read his able address, as reported, saw similar sentiments.

The Synod of Kentucky, in that able address to the Presbyterians of Kentucky, issued in 1835, said:

“If slavery be sinful, our duty is to rid ourselves of all participation in the sin which it involves, whether the colonizing scheme shall prosper or fail. And that it *is* sinful is as certain as that the light of God’s truth has shone upon our world.”

Can human testimony make the case stronger? And it should be remembered that these are Southern men testifying—men who cannot be charged with not knowing what slavery is.

We might add a list of statesmen and divines from other lands, still more numerous: but a few will suffice.

Adam Clark, in his Commentary, says: “In heathen countries slavery was in some sort excusable; but among Christians it is an enormity and a crime, for which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment.”

John Wesley, speaking of the natural rights of the slave, says: “Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the air; and no human creature can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.”

And in view of the fact that slavery deprives man of all his natural rights, he styles it “the sum of all villainies.”

3. As the Bible is the highest authority, the standard of right and wrong, and the final appeal, we prove that slavery is sinful by its teaching.

As Milton has suggested, in the primitive grant given to man, God gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field; but over man he gave not dominion—“man over man he made not lord.”

God’s deliverance of the children of Israel out of the hands of the oppressor, in a manner so miraculous and terrific, is a declaration of his abhorrence of the principle of oppression, too clear ever to be misunderstood. Hence, immediately we

find the inspired lawgiver warning the people "not to oppress the stranger"—those dwelling in the land they were about to take possession of, as well as all other people not Jews. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. If thou afflict them in *anywise*, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." All men know that to enslave is to oppress. Afterward, when He gave more specific laws—a code for the whole human family, the ten commandments—in the last one, He guarded all of man's rights, by forbidding man to covet any thing which is his neighbor's. Upon this we remark:

1. The word neighbor, as here used, means any one and every one of the human family. This is the primary import of the original Hebrew word, translated neighbor. Further, we know the moral law was not given to protect the rights, or to regulate the conduct of any one class of men towards another, but to protect the *rights* and regulate the conduct of ALL men. This will not be disputed. Therefore, the word neighbor, as here used, means any one and every one of the human family.

2. The moral law, like every other law, comes *not to confer rights*, but to *protect* rights *already existing*. It presupposes that man, as man, has certain rights to be guarded, not given by the Decalogue.

When the Decalogue was given, the Jews had no civil laws to govern them. They had just come up out of Egypt, and were an unorganized multitude in the wilderness at the foot of Mount Sinai. Yet, when the Decalogue was given, God recognized the fact that man, as man, has natural rights existing prior to the giving of even the moral law itself, and gave the law to protect rights already existing.

3. Among these rights is that of personal ownership, or liberty. For the moral law, in protecting the right of personal security by the sixth command, the right of personal chastity by the seventh, the right to the proceeds of his labor by the eighth, and the right of character by the ninth, of necessity in the tenth protects the right of personal ownership; for in this all other rights inhere, and cannot exist without it. Therefore, to take away personal ownership of an innocent man, or even to covet it, is a plain violation of the moral law and, says Job, "the transgression of the law is

sin." Therefore, slavery is sinful, for it violates the moral law.

The error of Dr. Junkin, President Shannon, and many others, is in overlooking the truth that the moral law presupposes and recognizes the right of *every man* to own himself; and was given to guard his rights, in common with others, from encroachment by his neighbor. And then, assuming, as they do, that man has a right to rob his fellow-man of his liberty, and that the word servant, as used in the ten commandments, means slave, they come to the conclusion that the tenth commandment recognizes the right of the master to hold another human being as a slave—as property. What chasms between premises and conclusions!

In the first place, as we shall show hereafter, the Hebrew word עֶבֶר is applied to all classes of servants in the Bible, and the Hebrews could not, at the time the ten commandments were given, have held any slaves. They were just emerging from the land of bondage themselves, and in no condition to possess involuntary servants.

Again, even if some covetous man was then robbing his fellow of personal ownership, and the text forbade his neighbor to covet that slave, still this is no recognition of a master's right to hold another man as a slave. For if my neighbor has stolen a piece of cloth, it is wrong, a violation of the command, for me to covet it, though he has no right to it. To covet would be an injury to my own heart, and it is right that I should be forbidden to exercise such desires, though the robber's title be bad.

The moral law, then, as we have seen, condemns slavery.

But in the Old Testament we have not only general precepts, condemnatory of slavery, but also many specific precepts.

In the chapter following that in which the Decalogue is found (Exod. xxi. 16), we find a statute, or precept, most sacredly guarding the liberty of man as man. "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death." Does any one say this passage means that one man shall not steal the servant or slave of another man? We answer:

1. Then the text would have been written, "He that steal-eth the servant or slave of another man shall be put to death." It is not so written, but forbids stealing *any man*.

2. The Hebrew word which is here translated *stealeth*, is

such as is used to designate the robbery of liberty—kidnapping. Thus, Joseph, using the same word, says, “I indeed was *stolen* away out of the land of the Hebrews.” Gen. xl. 15.

3. Had the text been simply designed to guard the property tenure of the master, then the statute would have required a property punishment as an atonement. It was a principle in the Jewish law, that when *property* was taken, the thief should return an increased amount of property; and if he had not property, then he was to be sold until his services would pay the amount. No such penalty is here affixed. But as the crime was that of robbing a man of his liberty, and as liberty was, and is, a right dear as life, the same penalty was affixed as that for taking life.

Do you say, though the Jew might not seize a free man and rob him of his liberty, yet he might buy from others those who had been robbed of their liberty? We answer: The statute as really forbade slaveholding as it did slave-making. Not only he that stealeth a man, but if the stolen man “be *found* in his hands, he shall surely be put to death.” And every person can see that there was consistency in this. Suppose Moses had passed a law forbidding horse-stealing, and then another allowing the Jew to buy those that they knew were stolen, would it not have been a glaring inconsistency, bringing a reproach upon the law and its author, in the eye of the whole world? Reader, in your haste to defend despotism, do not charge God with folly.

Again, God caused another statute to be written: “Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.” Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

Some interpret this command as applying only to the slaves of foreigners. But if so, the principle is the same, and forbids oppression, or assisting to oppress.

Again, that assurance might be doubly sure, God established not only precepts, but national customs, securing liberty to all men. “Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.” Lev. xxv. 10. By this statute and national custom all the tendencies to oppression, and possibilities of

slavery, were broken up. If a Jew or a Gentile were even disposed, they could not sell their service for a longer period than to the jubilee. Never was a nation of people more sedulously guarded against the sin of slavery. And this is just what, from the history of the nation, we would expect. God had just delivered them from the galling yoke of oppression, and awfully punished the Egyptians for the sin; and God, who loved his people, guarded them from a like sin and calamity.

Nations, however, like individuals, sometimes forget the pit from whence they have been digged, break their wholesome laws, and commit outrages on others. So did the Jews in after years. And then we hear God crying, by the mouth of his prophet: "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong: that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work." Jer. xxii. 13. Slavery takes from man his work, without giving him an equivalent. God forbids this element of slavery also. Again, we find this same people had actually brought into involuntary bondage their fellow-beings. God declares such conduct to be contrary to his commands, and punishes the Jews for the sin, by sending them away into bondage to the Babylonians, that they might learn the sinfulness of slavery. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every man to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." Jer. xxxiv. 17. At another time we find the Jews lamenting the absence of God's blessing, and, like many of this land, fasting and praying; yet, "smiting with the fist of wickedness," persisting in the enslavement of their fellow-men. God withholds his blessing from them, and tells them that justice and mercy are far more estimable in his sight than these hypocritical shows, or religious ceremonies, without a right state of heart. Read Isaiah lviii. 1-6. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" Nothing could more clearly show God's abhorrence of the sin of slavery and his approval of freedom.

Do you say these last cases cited had reference to the enslavement of Jews? We answer:

(1.) Doubtless God would have been as much displeased had the Jews enslaved any other people than their brethren, for the rights of one man are as sacred in his sight as the rights of any other man.

(2.) The gospel tells us the partition wall is broken down—that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—that God is no respecter of persons—that he, too, is unchangeable; and, therefore, if it was wrong for Jew to oppress Jew, it is *now* equally wrong for any human being to oppress *any other human being*.

Do you now say there are other passages which seem to sanction the principle of slavery? We remark :

(1.) Ninety-nine hundredths of Bible-readers will admit that the foregoing passages show the general *principles* of the Bible—Justice and Mercy; and are in accordance with the general tenor of its teaching in historical incident.

(2.) A correct rule of interpretation, as is universally admitted, requires that no author be made to contradict himself, and no isolated passages be so construed as to *contradict clear and well-defined principles* laid down by that author.

(3.) That when words or isolated passages are susceptible of two constructions, we must choose that construction which harmonizes best with principles previously laid down.

Now, the passages you will cite are susceptible of two constructions—one which you will put on, and one which we shall. And that construction which harmonizes best with the principles which we have seen are laid down in the Bible—that construction *must* be the correct one.

Do you begin by saying the Bible declares Canaan was to be “a servant of servants unto his brethren?” (Gen. ix. 25.) We answer :

1. The fulfillment of a prophecy is no justification of those who fulfill it, else the Ishmaelites whose hand was against every man and every man’s hand against them, Judas, who betrayed Christ, and the Jews who crucified him, were innocent; for these events were foretold.

2. The prophecy has had its fulfillment by other nations long since.

3. The people whom we are enslaving are not Canaanites. The Canaanites were Asiatics, a little tawny, with straight hair, different features and different language from those of the people of Western Africa, from whence our slaves were obtained. The Canaanites were the enterprising men, the shipbuild-

ers, the traders and merchants of their age, as the Sidonians and Tyrians. They settled the land of Canaan and the islands of the Mediterranean. A colony went to Carthage. These, as historians tell us, had straight hair.

Phut settled in Africa, and his posterity and some of the posterity of Cush, as Rollin tells us, migrated westward, and they doubtless were the progenitors of our slaves, but on them no prophetic malediction rested. For the curse was to be upon Canaan, not upon Ham. All the talk we have about the word Ham meaning black, and made so by the curse of the Almighty, is not only without proof—mere assertion—but is futile, because Ham is not the person cursed, but Canaan. And then the pro-slavery men affirming, it devolves upon them to prove that these slaves we have are descendants of Canaan. This cannot be done. The opposite is easily shown, as above alluded to.

Do you again bring up Gen. xvii. 12, and say Abraham bought children with his money, and that he held these as slaves, as property, in involuntary servitude? (for this only is slavery.) We answer: 1. If such were actually bought, we know from the same passage, and other passages, that these children were to be circumcised, and that no male person, uncircumcised, young or old, could be a member of the families of the patriarchs. "Thus they were admitted to all the privileges of the Lord."—*Watson*.

2. It is clear that the patriarchs, living not in confederacies, with the strong arm of municipal law to aid them, but wandering as individuals from country to country, with their hundreds of armed servants, could not have held these servants as slaves—persons held as property in involuntary service. From the very circumstances of the case, the servants must have been voluntary in their service.

President Shannon supposes Abraham had from 1,500 to 2,000 slaves in his possession—that is, one man held 2,000 human beings, and 318 of them armed, in INVOLUNTARY BONDAGE. The boys in the streets would laugh at such absurd conclusions. These children bought, were not held as slaves.

The mere fact that they were bought does not prove that they were held as slaves, as property. Boaz bought Ruth, Hosea his wife, and Jacob his, but they did not hold their wives as slaves. Nehemiah bought many of his brethren from the Persians (see Nehem. v. 8); but he did not hold

them as slaves, as property, to involuntary service. They were restored to freedom immediately.

Do you present another passage, Lev. xxv. 44-46, and claim from this, that the Jews bought adult slaves from a third person, and held them as property, and transmitted them and their issue to the children of these Jews? We reply: 1. If these servants had children, it is clear from Gen. xvii. 12, 13, and Exod. xii. 44, that these children and their parents had to be circumcised, and as such were made Jews, "entitled to all the privileges and immunities of Jews" —went out free at the jubilee, as the Jew did. (See Lev. xxv. 10.) So there was no hereditary servitude like ours—only a bond-service for a limited time, and that, as we have seen, voluntary.

2. The Hebrew word *ebed*, a form of which, in Lev. xxv. 44, is rendered "bondmen," does not, of itself, necessarily designate a slave; but denotes, as our word servant, a person who does service for another, *without regard to the time for which, or the principles upon which he does service.* Hence it may designate—

1. One who does voluntary service. (See 1 Kings xii. 7.) "And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant (עֶבֶד *ebed*) unto this people this day, and wilt serve and answer them, and speak good words to them, then will they be thy servants (עֶבְדֶיךָ *ebeds*) for ever. See, also, Gen. xxiv. 2: "Abraham said unto his eldest servant, (עֶבֶד *ebed*,) that ruled over all that he had."

2. It may designate those who pay a tax or tributary service to another nation; as that of the Gibeonites to the Jews, in doing service for the house of God, (see Josh. ix. 23,) yet having their own houses, property and families, and living in their own cities. (See Josh. x. 1; Ezra ii. 70; 2 Sam. xxi. 1-14; Nehem. vii. 73.)

3. It may designate a slave, as in Gen. xxxix. 17.

4. It may designate one who binds himself to do service for another, as Exod. xxi. 5, 6; or as the Jew who sold himself, that is, bound himself to perform service to the year of jubilee. (See Lev. xxv. 47.)

And, in the text under consideration, the word designates the relation, and is translated *bondmen*, because the time of service was *fixed by law*. In becoming servants, they bound themselves, by law, to serve until the jubilee. We said the

servant *bound himself*, for from Lev. xxv. 45 we learn that the Jews were to buy, that is, *procure* service, (for this is the primary import of the word rendered "buy,") from the strangers dwelling in their land, as well as those round about them. And the words "children of the stranger," in verse 25, mean adult Gentiles; just as the words "children of Israel," in verse 26 mean adult Israelites. Moreover, these persons, called children of the stranger, had "begotten children in the land." (See verse 26.) Of these the Jews were to buy, or procure service.

Now who sold these strangers? The Jew dare not seize them, and do so. Such an act was punished with death. (See Exod. xxi. 6.) Then it is clear that they *bound themselves*, or sold their service until the jubilee. Do you say these servants were to be a possession and an inheritance, and, therefore, must have been held as slaves, as property? We reply: The words "possession" and "inheritance" are often used in a different or limited sense, not designating property tenure. God says, concerning Israel, "I am their inheritance, and ye shall give them no inheritance in Israel; I am their possession." (Ezek. xlv. 28.) Did Israel own or hold God as a slave, as property, because he is called their "inheritance" and "possession?" Certainly not. So previous statutes, as we have seen, forbid the idea that the Jews should have an absolute property tenure in these Gentiles, or strangers.

Again, Isaiah, describing the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon, says, "the strangers (Babylonians) will be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob; and Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids." (See Isa. xiv. 1, 2.) The truth taught is that many of the Babylonians would embrace the Jewish religion. To do so, they would have to become circumcised, and members of the family—"would be induced to become proselytes; to be WILLING to accompany them to their own homes, and to become their servants there."—*Barnes*. Here possession denotes the service which the Babylonians voluntarily rendered to the Jews—"they CLAVE to the house of Jacob."

Also the word "for ever," in the text under consideration, is not to be used as it generally is, denoting perpetual property in these servants and their issue. For the master did not live perpetually—the servant did not live perpetually—

and, as we have seen, there was no such thing as hereditary slavery—i. e., children of servants were not held as slaves, but circumcised and made Jews, “entitled to all the privileges of Jews.” Also, the jubilee terminated all bond-service. Josephus says, even the ear-bored servant and his wife and children went out free then.

The passage, correctly rendered, is as follows: “Always ye shall serve yourselves with them;” that is, you shall invariably—always—procure your servants from among the strangers among you, and around you. Barnes gives a similar exposition of the text, and you will see the same in the margin of the Bible published by the Bible Society.

Thus expounded, the text presents not the Jewish code as simply a refinement of previous barbarisms, still selfish and unjust, but steps at once upon the broad ground of justice and mutual benevolence, and harmonizes with principles and statutes previously referred to.

But did we even grant that the patriarchs, and the Israelites under the Mosaic economy, held slaves, that would be no permit to us: for the patriarchs had concubines; we may not therefore have.

Under the Mosaic economy, God commanded the Israelites to slay the Amalekites. God, as sovereign, had a right to punish the Amalekites, *for their sins*, with the sword, if he chose. But may we, therefore, without any such command, go and make war upon an innocent people?

Likewise, had God even given the Jews the privilege to go and enslave the Canaanites, because of their sins, we may not, without any such permit, go and enslave the same people, much less an innocent and a wholly different people. For the Africans, whom we are enslaving, are a different race of men, different in form, color, and language, from those Asiatics who did a bond-service to the Jews.

But do you say the principle of slavery was sanctioned? This we deny. And if it had been, then who shall determine the race, color, or form to be enslaved? We have not got the people who did service for the Jews, and God has not said in his Word that any color has the right over another color to enslave it.

Thus, it is clear that none of the isolated passages most relied on sanction slavery; and the plain principles of the Old Testament show it to be sinful.

NEW TESTAMENT.

In this, we are told that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." (Acts xvii. 17.) And, that "he is no respecter of persons." (Acts x. 34; Eph. vi. 9.) And Christ has laid down as the foundation of all true religion, and as the rule of our conduct towards him and his children, that we "love the Lord with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. This is the law and the prophets." (Matt. xxii. 37, 40.) And a parallel passage to this last—one meaning the same thing—is: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets"—the substance of all. This is called the Golden Rule, because it is the best one ever framed by which to regulate human conduct; and one so plain, that all who desire to do so, can easily understand it. This rule plainly, as the large class of mankind admit, forbids our *bringing* any man into slavery, or *retaining* him in it, after he is brought in by others.

A prominent member in one of the churches of the land was, not long since, attempting to prove slavery right from the Bible. Said a bystander, who is not a professed Christian, "Any man who has common sense, knows that slavery is wrong, without a Bible. But let us take the Bible. 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' Can a man act according to this rule, and enslave his fellow-mortal?" The member saw the force of the precept, and abruptly remarked: "There is a difference between *me* and a *nigger*." But, said the bystander, "Are negroes not men?" "Yes," said the member. "Then," said the bystander, "Christ requires you to treat them as men—as you would men should treat you." Here was an end of the argument; for, as is manifest, if it is wrong to enslave a white man, it is equally wrong to enslave a black man. But, says one, if men's desires are to be the standard by which this rule is to be interpreted, then any idle man may demand of me to give him a part of my farm, for which I had toiled hard, saying, "If I were in your place and you were in mine, you would want me to give to you." To this we reply, he has no right to desire his own aggrandizement at the expense of another's righteous gains. This would be violating another command, which forbids us to covet any

thing that belongs to another. The meaning of the rule is, "All lawful things ye would that others should do unto you, that do ye unto them." Now, as Wesley said, "Liberty is the birthright of every man—the inalienable right of every man, not a criminal;" and to desire another to give him his liberty, is not coveting that which belongs to another, but claiming that which by nature and right belongs to himself. The above text, then, condemns slavery.

Again—the New Testament tells us not to go beyond nor defraud one another in any matter. (1 Thess. iv. 6.) This makes no exception for color, but fixes our duty to all men. To defraud is to take without giving an equivalent—to cheat. When either the master, or society, takes from the slave the proceeds of his labor—when the master, or society, takes from the poor slave his wife, his child, his liberty, does—can the master give an equivalent? Hog and hominy are no compensation for lost manhood. The motto of our forefathers was, "Give me liberty, or give me death." Does the master give an equivalent for lost liberty? If not, he defrauds his neighbor, he sins against high Heaven, he sins against the person of Christ; for Christ will say at the judgment-day, "Inasmuch as ye did it [acts of unkindness] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 45.)

Again—the New Testament requires: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is *just* and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Col. iv. 1.) Now, justice manifestly has for its object the securing to man his natural rights, rights which he would have in a state of nature—right to personal ownership or liberty—right to personal security—right to the proceeds of his labor, etc. If, then, the master will give justice to his servant, he cannot hold him as a slave a single moment. Also, in the foregoing text, the apostle requires masters to give to their servants that which is equal—that is, to treat them as a fellow-equal, as you would you or your child should be treated, were you or your child laboring for another man. Do as you would others should do unto you, is what it means; and in the words of the Synod of Kentucky, in their able address: "If masters complied with the apostolic injunction to them, and gave to their servants, as they are directed to do, 'that which is just and equal,' there would be at once an end of all that is properly called slavery."

That the apostle intended to teach that masters who held slaves should give to those slaves their liberty—personal ownership, is manifest from the fact that, when addressing those servants held as slaves, (doubtless by irreligious masters,) the apostle says—“if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.” (1 Cor. vii. 21.) This is proof positive that the apostle considered freedom as a preferable state for the servant, and right for him to have it; otherwise he would not have urged the servant to take it and doubtless every Christian master would, as far as he could, labor to secure that which was right, and taught as right by the inspired penman. This passage alone proves that liberty is the right of the slave, and that to withhold it is sin.

Again, the apostle, speaking to Timothy concerning the law given by God through Moses, says: “The law is made for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for *men-stealers*, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be anything contrary to sound doctrine,”—the glorious gospel of the blessed God being the standard. (See 1 Tim. i. 9–11.) That slavery was opposed to, or condemned by the gospel, we have already seen. It is therefore, by the teaching of the apostle, condemned by the law. But the word here translated “men-stealers” condemns slaveholding, directly and expressly. The original Greek word for man-stealer is *ανδραποδιστης*, (*andrapodistes*), which is formed from the verb *ανδραποδιζω*, (*andrapodizo*), which means to enslave. (See Robinson.) This is its true and primary meaning. *No man will or can dispute this.* “Andrapodistes, coming from this verb, means one who makes a slave in any one of the senses of andrapodizo.” (See Donnegan.) *Ανδραποδισταίς*, then, the word used in the text, includes all those engaged directly or indirectly in enslaving their fellow-men, or who hold them in bondage. This interpretation is in accordance with reason and justice. Is not the knowing participant in crime as truly guilty as the perpetrator of the first act? Is not the smuggler of stolen goods as guilty as he who first stole them? The above exposition has been confirmed by some of the highest ecclesiastical authorities in Christendom.

In the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, as amended by act of the General Assembly of 1794, and appended to the 142d question of the Larger Catechism, will

be found the following note in exposition of this text: "The law is made for men-stealers. This crime, among the Jews, exposed the perpetrators of it, as we have seen, to capital punishment, (see Exod. xxi. 16;) and the apostle here classes them with *sinner*s of the first rank. The word he uses, in its original import, comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or retaining them in it. Stealers of men are those who bring off slaves or freemen, and keep, buy, or sell them. 'To steal a freeman,' says Grotius, 'is the highest kind of theft.' In other instances we only steal human property; but when we steal or retain men in slavery, we seize those who, in common with ourselves, are constituted, by the original grant, lords of the earth. Gen. i. 28."

Dr. Adam Clark, a distinguished Methodist divine, in his Commentary, has these words on the above text: "Andrapodistais, slave-dealers; whether those who carry on the traffic in human flesh and blood; or those who steal a person in order to sell him into bondage; or those who buy such stolen men and women, no matter of what color, or what country; or the nations who legalize, or connive at such traffic; all these are men-stealers, and God classes them with the most flagitious of mortals."

Slaveholding, then, is not only sinful, but classed with sins of the most aggravated character. We have then sustained our position, that the New Testament also condemns slavery and slaveholding.

Does the objector come up with isolated passages, as objections to our argument? Then, we again remind him of that plain rule of interpretation, which requires that isolated passages be not so construed as to contradict plain and well-known principles previously laid down in the same book—that an author should not be so construed as to contradict himself.

That the principles of the Bible condemn slavery, is conceded.

Wayland, a Baptist divine, in his Moral Science, says: "The moral precepts of the Bible are diametrically opposed to slavery."

Scott, in his Commentary, says: "The principles of both the law and the gospel, when carried out, infallibly abolish slavery."

Barnes says: "No candid reader of the New Testament, it

is believed, can doubt that the principles of Christianity are opposed to the existence of slavery."

Adam Clark, a Methodist divine, in his Commentary, says: "In heathen countries, slavery was in some sort excusable, but among Christians it is an enormity and a *crime*, for which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment."

Now, every candid man must admit that, the principles of Christianity being opposed to slavery, its *practice* must be; and that its specific precepts should be construed in accordance with its principles; and the individual who construes them otherwise is manifestly in error.

Let us notice some of these passages. Does the objector begin with Eph. vi. 5-9; Col. iii. 22-25; 1 Pet. ii. 18, claiming from these passages that servants are commanded to be obedient to their masters; and that this proves that masters do not do wrong in enslaving them? We reply:

1. As we have already shown the word translated servant in the Old Testament, so we might show that *δουλος*, in the New Testament, does not of necessity designate a slave. And yet, before a shadow of argument can be derived from these passages, it must be proved that slaves are here designated.

2. There is a relation designated by the term servant, which is right; as that of a minor, or bound child to a guardian; a hireling who voluntarily binds himself, contracts to do the lawful bidding of his employer. There were Judaizing teachers, and some Gentile believers, "who, on pretense that they had a sufficient rule of conduct in the spiritual gifts with which they were endowed," affirmed that they were under no obligation to any other authority, and taught others the same. Here was a violation of the obligations of children to parents, wards to guardians, hirelings to employers—relations useful and right. Now, to correct such teaching, and to prevent the "name of God and his doctrine" from being blasphemed in giving (as was claimed by Judaizing teachers) countenance to such insubordination—the violation of relations always admitted to be right—the apostle properly enjoined upon servants obedience, and the command would be just as appropriate, supposing slaves to be unknown.

3. The injunction to obedience is not without limitation. Should a husband require the wife to murder, or profane the name of God, or steal, she would be under no obligation to do so. The command then to wives presupposes that the requirements are reasonable and *right*; otherwise she is not

under obligation to obey. So, the command to the servant to be obedient presupposes that the master requires only that which is *right*. The command does not require that we give up our *natural rights*. Suppose we white men were held as slaves by the Indians or English, would we suppose that the command to servants, "to be obedient to masters," implied that the Indians or English had a right to hold us as slaves—deprive us of liberty? This prepares us to notice,

4. The fact that we, as free citizens, are required to be obedient and honest—"subject to the powers that be"—is no evidence that God recognizes the right, in individual tyrants or governments, to enslave or even oppress us. So the fact that servants are required to be obedient, even if those servants be slaves, is no evidence that the master has a *right to enslave*. We are commanded to "*do good* to those who despitely use us," but this does not imply that our enemy has a *right* to so treat us.

We are commanded, if our enemy "smite us on one cheek, to turn the other also;" that is, to bear it patiently, not to resort to individual retaliation. But does this obedience enjoined, and this forbearance imposed, imply that our enemy has a right thus to treat us? Certainly not.

Again, the servant is commanded to be obedient not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, (*σκολιός, tortuous.*)

Does this injunction to obedience on the part of the servant imply that the froward or tortuous master has a right to act so towards the servant? Certainly not. No more does the injunction to obedience on the part of the servant imply that the master has a right to tyrannize over and rob the servant of his natural right—liberty. One duty is not to be so construed as to conflict with another duty. And to construe the duty of obedience, on the part of the servant, so as to yield his liberty, his personal ownership, to the master, is to deprive him of the capacity to perform other duties—as that of worshipping God when and where he in conscience may deem it duty,—to perform duties to his own soul, to his wife, child and to his fellow-beings.

Does the objector say, further, that "the servants are described as being 'under the yoke,' (1 Tim. vi. 1, 2,) and that this means that they were enslaved?" We answer:

1. The word translated servant, as we have shown, does not necessarily denote one who is a slave.

2. Neither is it certain that the phrase "yoke," and "under the yoke," refer to slavery. As used in the New Testament, and applied to men in every other instance, it designates a voluntary relation; as, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." So in all other cases. The relation alluded to by the apostle may have been merely a voluntary relation—the relation of minors bound, or of those who had bound themselves, to heathen and Christian masters. This view is the more plausible, from the fact that the apostle urges, as a consideration of obedience and kind regard, that the master was a "partaker of the benefit."

The relation was such, that master and servant could, with propriety, be termed partners, not in the sense of getting gain, for that is not the meaning of *εὐεργεσίας* (*euergesias*), the Greek word here translated "of the benefit," but in doing good, or conferring benefit. (See Robinson's Greek and English Lexicon.) The presumption is, that "believing masters," not mere professors of religion, would make all their business conduce to the promotion of the gospel and the salvation of souls. How totally inconsistent is this with the idea that the relation was an involuntary one! If the law of the land made one Christian a slave to another, the law of Christ's house emancipated him in a moment! Its language was, "*All ye are brethren.*" Who does not see that it would be ridiculous for any master of a slave to say to him, "Brother, we shall be able to do a good deal for the missionary cause this year"?

3. There was a propriety in such instructions, even to those not slaves, from the fact that there were Judaizing teachers, of the party of the Jews called Zealots, who taught that it was not right for any one to yield obedience to those who were not Jews; especially they taught that this was true with Christians, who were the "Lord's freemen." (See McKnight's comment on 1 Tim. vi. 3; Titus i. 10, and his introduction to 13th chapter of Romans.)

It is then by no means certain that the servants alluded to by the apostle were slaves. It is assumption to say they were.

4. But if it yet be claimed that the servants under the yoke were slaves, and that they were held as such by believing masters, then we reply, Christians could have been slaves to each other only nominally, not really—so, only so far as the claim of the Roman law was concerned—not by the will

of the master, as we have seen from the above. The laws of Rome were such that a master could not emancipate legally, only as he took the slave before a magistrate, gave good and sufficient reasons why the slave should be free, and then obtained the consent of the magistrate; which was difficult to obtain in a country where the slaves were swarming in tumultuous thousands, where insurrections had been frequent, and where public sentiment was almost universally opposed to emancipation. (See Gibbon's Rome, vol. i. chap. 2; and Biblical Repository, vol. vi.) Hence, a master might give up his slave—say to him, “go free,” and *treat him as such*; yet such slave, as the slaves set free by the Quakers in South Carolina, in opposition to law, would be regarded, *by the Roman law*, as property still, and, in that sense, under the yoke, but not held so by the Christian master. He could not do so and obey Christ: “Whatsoever ye would others should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

But, it will be said, this proves nothing respecting slaves to those who were not Christians. To this we answer, that obedience to such masters is put by the apostle upon an entirely different footing. The only reason given for obeying such masters was, “that the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphemed.” A very different reason, surely, from that given in the other case, and from that given for obedience to parents. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” And yet this command to children is limited by the phrase, “in the Lord.” But slavery knows no such limitation to obedience or object for obedience as the Bible sanctions. The slave is, to all intents and purposes, at the disposal of his master, and must obey. Thus says the law. Now, suppose his master command him to violate the Sabbath. Must he do this, in order that the name of God be not blasphemed? How absurd! There is a limit, therefore, to all the obedience required of servants to their masters in the Bible, and that limit, if allowed by the laws, would make *real* slavery impossible.

But let us look still further at the object for which servants should obey their masters. We have seen that there was propriety in the injunction, if addressed to servants not slaves, on account of the false teaching of the Zealots. There was propriety in it also from other circumstances, surrounding the disciples at that time. There was not a free country in the world to which they might flee and be safe; “on the side

of oppressors there was power ;” punishment would unavoidably follow disobedience, in every instance, even when conscience required them to disobey. Is it strange that the apostles, in such circumstances, should counsel obedience, submission ; especially as it would, in many instances, prevent blasphemy ? Where we cannot maintain our rights, an attempt to do so by resistance becomes wrong, from inexpediency, and results only in contention, and perhaps blasphemy. Such was then the case of the slave, and therefore this injunction of the apostle was good and right. But by what contortion and wresting can it be inferred hence, that masters had a right to command such obedience ? Certainly none that will not shock as much the intellect as the moral sense of any upright and discerning man.

Now, it being an admitted fact,

1. That the Bible is an inspired book, written by a mind that does not teach contradictions ; and,
2. That the plain principles of the Bible (justice, mercy, impartial love) are opposed to slavery ; and,
3. That isolated passages or precepts must be so interpreted as to harmonize with the fundamental principles of the Bible ; and the above constructions harmonizing with those principles ; one of these, or some construction similar, must be the correct one. Certain it is, that the passage ought not to be construed so as to favor slavery.

Again—Does the Bible teach moral opposites ? Does it teach at one moment that liberty is right, and at the next breath that slavery is right ? Who will assert it ? And yet this is really the position of those who maintain that the Bible sanctions slavery. In their own case, they claim that the Bible sanctions their liberty ; but in the case of another, they claim that the Bible sanctions his enslavement. Such inconsistencies work out their own cure—show that those who practice them or teach them are in error.

But does the objector say, “ Oh, I don’t claim that the apostles sanctioned the enslavement of white men, but the enslavement of negroes—black people !” Well, let us test this plea also. Now, it will not be disputed, that if the apostles’ teaching and practice sanctioned slavery, it sanctioned *the slavery of that age*—the slavery amongst which the apostles moved. N. B. THIS SLAVERY WAS WHITE SLAVERY ; that is, the large portion of those enslaved were *as white, and many of them whiter than their masters*. This will be apparent to

every reader, when we reflect that the Romans had no slave-trade to the western coast of Africa, as we have had, but made slaves of those taken as captives in war. And now, who were the nations conquered? They were Germans, Gauls, Spaniards, Grecians, Egyptians, Carthaginians, Syrians, Armenians,—those living in Mesopotamia, Dacia, and the many provinces of Asia Minor.

And now, what was the complexion of these nations? Most were as white or whiter than the Romans themselves. So true was this, that the Romans (who were then the conquerors of all the nations among whom the apostles moved) designated their slaves from the rest of their citizens by a peculiar dress.

Also, Virginia was claimed as a slave, and she was so fair, that the "modest blush" could be seen on her cheek. She could not have been claimed as a slave, had their slaves been only negroes.

Also, when the Latins demanded hostages of the Romans, they demanded a number of the daughters of the first families of Rome. And the Romans took of their slaves and attired them in the dress of the females of Rome, and sent them to the Latins, who *received* them as Romans. This they would not have done, had the slaves been negroes. Scores of such facts might be mentioned, showing that the slaves of the nations among whom the apostles moved and taught were white. If then the teaching and practice of the apostles sanctioned slavery, they sanctioned white slavery. Who will claim this? He that does it, in the language of another, makes himself the enemy of his species.

But again it is said, "Christ lived in the age of slavery," (but not in the land of slavery,) "and so far as the record goes, he said nothing against slavery. we may therefore infer it is right." We reply :

1. We know not how often Christ spoke against slavery. We have not on record all that he said. (See John xxi. 25.)

2. If we may infer that slavery is right, because, "so far as the record goes," Christ spake not against it, then may we infer that he approved the deliberate slaughter of the children of Bethlehem by Herod, and the murder of John the Baptist; for, "so far as the record goes," he said nothing against these acts.

It is said, "the apostles labored amongst slavery—why did they not speak against it—in so many words condemn it?"

We ask, in return, why they did not speak directly against gambling, piracy, burglary, *persecution*, and gladiatorial shows? Do you say they did not attempt to specify all things wrong, but laid down principles against all wrong? So we say they laid down principles opposed to slavery. Again, by the Roman law, "The father had power over his son to beat him cruelly, expose his child in infancy to death—pronounce it illegitimate, by refusing to take it formally from the ground and place it in his bosom—could imprison or put to death, if it deserved it."—*Hague*.

"The son in his father's house was a mere thing; confounded by the laws with the movables, the cattle, and the slaves, whom the capricious master might alienate or destroy, without being responsible to an earthly tribunal."—*Gibbon*.

So with the wife. "The law placed her like a slave at his feet; and her life hung on his decree." If it was found that she had drunk wine, then the husband might put her to death Tacitus mentions a case in the reign of Nero. Should a Roman citizen marry a foreigner, then the husband might, at any whim, alienate her, treat her children as illegitimate, and the Roman law gave to the mother and children no redress.

Strange as it may seem to some, "so far as the record goes," no one in all the realm of the Cæsars is told that these things are wrong—a contravention of the original law of Paradise, which placed the husband and wife on the ground of a true moral equality. We ask, why did not the apostles tell husbands and parents not to do these things? Why did they not speak against them? Do you say that everybody can see that such things were wrong, and that the apostles laid down rules or requirements, which, if carried out, would destroy all such things? So we answer in reference to slavery—everybody can see it is wrong; and did we carry out the requirements laid down by the apostles, we should soon do away all slavery.

Does the objector then ask, "Why did not the apostle tell the servant to try to get his freedom?" We answer: Some servants, such as minors, bound, and those who had voluntarily bound themselves for an equivalent, these ought not to seek release. But those servants, whom the context shows to be slaves, to those he said, "If thou mayest be made free, use it rather." (1 Cor. vii. 21.) Or, as some good scholars claim, and as the original Greek text will allow, (*ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δυνασάαι ἐλευθερὸς γενέσθαι μάλον χρῆσαι,*) "If thou art able to free thyself, use it rather": thus deciding that freedom is right,

and to be sought by righteous means. And this decision of the apostle ought of itself to satisfy any mind that the apostle did not intend to sanction slavery.

True, some quote the preceding part of the verse: "If thou art called, being a servant, care not for that," as a sanction of slavery. Now, as the phrases, "lay not up treasures on earth," and "take no thought for the morrow," simply mean that we should not place our affections on earthly treasures, and not be more anxious about the things of to-morrow than the interests of the soul, so the phrase under consideration means, 'be not more anxious about temporal freedom than spiritual freedom.' And as the phrases alluded to did not literally forbid making some provision for the morrow, and for coming winter, so the phrase, "If thou art called, being a servant, care not for it," does not literally forbid desire and efforts for freedom; because the apostle says, immediately after, "If thou art able to free thyself, choose it rather;" or, as our translation has it, "If thou mayest be made free, choose it rather."

The apostle did not intend to sanction the withholding liberty from an innocent man, but the case is a most forcible one, teaching the opposite. And hence the language in the 23d verse: "Ye are bought with a price," (the blood of Christ,) "be not ye the servants of men." That is, you ought to employ your time and strength in serving God, rather than men. So far, then, as the teaching of the apostle is concerned, there is nothing in it which sanctions slavery, but it rather makes it the manifest duty of every master to secure to the slave that liberty which he ought to employ for the glory of God and the well-being of man. And there is nothing in the teaching of the apostle which forbids the slave peacefully to secure his liberty, if he believes he can serve God better in so doing.

Does the objector ask, Why did not the apostles tell masters to free their slaves? We answer, as Christ did on a certain occasion, by asking another question: "Why did they not tell fathers not to expose their children to death—to do all they could in treating them humanely, and let them have freedom at adult age?"

Why did they not tell husbands, if they should take wives from another nation than their own, to treat these wives and their children as legitimate; and not to put a wife to death for drinking wine? These things were contrary to the spirit

of the gospel, as all will admit. Why, then, did not the apostles command fathers and husbands to act accordingly? When the objector answers these questions, we will answer his question.

2. They did tell masters to "give to their servants that which is just and equal," which, as we have seen, would secure freedom to the slave of every master obeying the injunction. And we shall soon see that there was no more necessity for a specific command on this point, than in reference to many other wrongs.

Does the objector say they used terms which designated slaves—property tenure in man? We reply:

(1.) The term *δουλος*, like our own word servant, designates one who does service for another, irrespective of the time for which, or the principles upon which, the service is rendered. Hence, it is sometimes applied to Christ and the apostles. See Phil. ii. 7, and 2 Cor. iv. 5. Were the apostles and Christ the slaves—the property of any man? And though the term may also be used to designate a slave—property tenure in man, yet,

(2.) A great error into which many persons have fallen is that of interpreting the Greek words *δουλος* and *κυριος* or *δεσποτης*, servant and master, by the Roman law, or our own civil law, instead of the law of Christ. Under the former, these words often denoted property, and property holders in man. Under the latter, the law of Christ, they could denote no such thing. Such relations were a moral impossibility. As well may we suppose, that when they used the Greek words *γονευσ* and *τεκνον*, parent and child—*ανη* and *γυνη*, husband and wife, they meant by these, *property* and *property holders*—and by their use, meant to sanction the principle as right. We know that the law of Christ *destroyed such relations*, and restored the primitive law of moral equality.

These epistles of the apostles in which the above words are found, were not addressed to the world at large; nor to members of the Roman government as such; but to little bands of Christians, with whom the law of Christ was above all other laws—a community whose fundamental law was, "love thy neighbor as thyself"—"whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them;" a community taught to call no man master—"one" (Christ) "is your master, and ALL YE ARE BRETHEREN." These laws formed a standard by which to regulate all relations of society; and

slavery could no more exist under such laws, than it could exist in a government which was a literal and pure democracy. That men acting on the principles of Roman law held slaves, we admit; but that they, acting on the principles of Christ's law, held slaves, we deny. Under the latter there was no necessity for a specific command requiring husbands not arbitrarily to take the lives of their wives or children; nor to withhold from their servants their liberty—their natural rights. Under this law it was sufficient to say, "Husbands, love your wives—masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal"—"do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." And as they destroyed the property relation in the wife and the child, so they destroyed the property relation in the *servant*.

The Bible then giving no sanction to slavery, and its fundamental principles being manifestly condemnatory of it, and slavery being a plain violation of natural rights, it should be conceded to be sinful by every candid mind.

The large mass of men will, as we believe, decide that gambling, counterfeiting, and highway robbery are nothing, when compared with slavery. The counterfeiter imposes spurious currency on you, and the gambler, by sleight of hand, and perhaps unseen knavery, wins and receives your money, and, in either case, the products of your toil are taken, without giving you an equivalent; and the Church will discipline the latter, and the courts punish the former; yet you are still the owner of your person, left free and able-bodied, and as such, you can toil for more money, minister to the wants of your family, and discharge the duties of a freeman. But slavery not only takes the products of the poor man's toil, without giving an equivalent, but robs him of his liberty—the very capacity to minister to his own or others' wants, and converts him into a mere chattel.

An elder in one of the churches in our State remarked, not long since, that he was like Dr. Rice and Dr. Junkin; he thought "the wrong of slavery consisted in its abuse." A friend standing by said: "Father R——, suppose I should meet you on the highway, and, by superior force, take your horse from you, and keep him for my own use, and, though I should leave you free to go on, acquire means with which to buy another, minister to the wants of your family, and worship your God as you should choose, yet would not the act be sinful?" "Yes," said Father R——. "But if, instead of

taking your horse, I had taken you, and made you a slave, deprived you of your liberty, and the very right to possess, would I not have done you a greater wrong?" "Yes," said Father R——. "Well, then," said the friend, "is not slavery worse than stealing the horse?" "Yes," said Father R——. And there is not, perhaps, a candid man in Christendom, who would not admit the same. If the churches should not fellowship him who steals his neighbor's horse, ought they to fellowship him who commits a worse crime? If they would discipline the smaller, surely they ought to discipline the greater crime. One of the objects of a true Church is to hold up the right and condemn the wrong. If they do not, they become the enemies of righteousness, breaking down the distinctions between virtue and vice, good and evil, leaving nothing to separate the Church from the world, save her outward ritual or ceremony.

On the floor of that convention which met last spring in Frankfort, to devise more efficient plans for the removal of slavery, even by those who did not like to admit that slavery is sinful in itself, the concession was made, that this is the feeling of a large portion of the Christian people of this land. It was impressively said: "there is away down in the hearts of a large portion of the Christian people of this land, a feeling at war with the institution of slavery. There are many thousand benevolent people in the State, who, I care not what they may say, feel in their hearts that slavery is wrong." Mark, *slavery*, not its excrescences or its consequences—but slavery is regarded as wrong. Now, what is the difference between that which is in itself wrong, and that which is sinful? If wrong, it is unrighteous; and John tells us that "all unrighteousness is sin." Yea, politicians themselves admit it. Even that man, Thomas F. Marshall, who took so prominent a part in crushing the freedom of the press in Lexington, Ky., on the memorable 18th; when afterwards challenged by a prominent preacher of our State to discuss the question whether slavery was not sanctioned by the Word of God, he replied: "I have too much respect for my God, to attempt to defend him from such a slander."

Has not Mr. Turner, the perpetualist of Madison county, in his late speech of concessions, in the convention for framing a new constitution, admitted that the buying and selling of slaves here is no better than piracy—the traffic on the high seas? a crime punished by our Government with death.

And slavery necessarily exposes the slave to this horrible traffic, whether the master desire it or not. For, in case the master falls behind with his creditors, or dies, the law takes the poor slave, sells him from his wife, his children, his friends, into returnless bondage. And the man or woman who holds a slave, holds him thus exposed. Is this doing as we would be done by? If not, we are sinning. And if there are non-slaveholders who, by their votes, sanction this traffic, they are guilty of the same sin.

The Louisville Journal, speaking of slavery, says: "Slavery in Kentucky is a social, *moral*, and political evil." Now, a *moral* evil is sin. The Examiner, in its faithful vigilance for admissions of truth, speaking of the Journal, says: "It acknowledges the *sinfulness* of the system—it could not help doing so."

Now, when politicians and journalists themselves freely admit that slavery is sinful—a truth proclaimed by our forefathers, and written in the "political faith of our nation," almost a hundred years since—we think Christians and Christian ministers ought to admit it with much more readiness and frankness. This hair-splitting about a thing being wrong, and yet not sinful, looks very much as if a man either wanted candor, or else was afraid an admission of truth would disclose an inconsistency in *practice*.

Shall the Christian ministry—the men who, like Christ, their divine exemplar, are anointed by the Spirit of God "to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year (the jubilee) of the Lord"—(Luke iv. 18)—shall these, the commissioned messengers of love and mercy, with Bible in hand, be the loudest and longest defenders of the worst tyranny the sun looks upon?

But to return. When we say that slavery is sinful, we do not mean that every master or mistress, who may sustain the nominal relation of master or mistress, is, in heart, or in the sight of God, a sinner. A master may have under his guardianship minors whom he has willed or recorded free, when such minors shall have arrived at adult age. Or a master may have bought a slave for the purpose of freeing that slave, and has not had time to obtain from the county court a deed or record of the slave's manumission, or time to convey the slave to a land or State where the slave can be free; or some such relation as the cases referred to, in which the master or mistress holds not the fellow-being as property.

but only in guardianship for a time. Such persons are not guilty of the sin of slaveholding. They are only guardians or redeemers, as Nehemiah, who bought some of his brethren, in order to secure to them their freedom. But the law, the commonwealth, the community of citizens, hold the purchased man as a slave—rob him of his liberty, his personal ownership, and thus create and perpetuate a relation which, as we have seen, is sinful. So that slavery, by whomsoever caused, is always sinful. The community, in making and perpetuating laws which deprive the innocent adult man or woman of freedom, are the slaveholders and sinners in such cases. But the man who will hunt up shadows, where the reality does not exist, for the purpose of evading the true and practical issue, "whether individual, wilful, and deliberate slaveholding is sinful or not," shows a want of candor, as we believe, a want of common honesty in his investigations for truth.

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